Modern discussions and lens of sign scholars

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Abstract
Discussions on disability justice within the university have centered disabled students but leaves us with questions about disability justice for the disabled scholar and disabled communities affiliated with universities through the lens of signed language instruction and deaf people. Universities use American Sign Language (ASL) programs to exploit the labors of deaf people without providing a return to disabled communities or disabled academics. ASL courses offers valuable avenues for cripping the university. Through the framework of cripping, we argue universities that offer ASL classes and profit from them have an obligation to ensure that disabled students and disabled academics are able to navigate and succeed in their systems. Disabled students, communities, and academics should capitalize upon the popularity of ASL to expand accessibility and the place of disability in higher education.
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It is common for deaf people to grumble about nondeaf people teaching American Sign Language and deaf culture in higher education institutions. As deaf people experience the sting of audism, ableism, and inequity, they pull back and situate this discourse within the larger notions of disability justice and social justice. Even though American Sign Language (ASL) has gone vogue, deaf people continue to remain with other disabled people on the margins of U.S. society. Inclusion and access to academia must be made not only for deaf and disabled students, but also deaf and disabled scholars and faculty, despite the cost.

Although deaf people in the western world have historically considered themselves as sociolinguistic minority groups separate from other disabled communities, we recognize the underlying structural forces and historical, social, and cultural processes that shape deaf people's relations to society and the academy are tied to dis/ability and ableism. As appropriate, we refer to deaf people as a distinct population within the disabled community when speaking to experiences that mainly affect deaf people. However, we use the term disabled when referring to experiences that affect broader disabled communities, including deaf communities. We also suggest solutions via the concept

of cripping the academy. Cripping requires that higher education institutions consider authentic voices, faculty, and encounters when offering disability-related content.

Explicit representation of disability among students, faculty, and academic discourse benefits everyone. In this article, we argue that American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Studies serves as an avenue for abled students, colleges, and universities to engage with disability in critical ways. ASL courses, unlike other foreign languages, give abled students the opportunity to transcend not only cultural boundaries but also the boundaries between abled and disabled in challenging what we take for granted in our understandings of normalcy (Annamma, et al, 2013). ASL also offers opportunities for educational interventions that work toward the ends of a liberal education.

And yet, several questions must be considered when analyzing the place of ASL education in higher education. Who should be able to teach ASL and disability related courses? How has the surge of interest in ASL affected signed language teachers, deaf and disabled academics, and deaf and disabled communities? This is not the first article to examine the appropriateness of nondeaf people teaching ASL. What this article does is examine institutional practices for offering ASL classes and considers how ASL can bring the benefits of disability to the higher education classroom. In our analysis, we extend Claire McKinney's (2016) concept of cripping the classroom to cripping the college and university, and more specifically, cripping the ASL classroom. To crip higher education is to intentionally create welcoming spaces for disabled students and faculty. It involves embracing disability scholarship and the study of disability across the curriculum. Cripping higher education allows students, administrators, and scholars to critically engage with questions of language, social control, and power surrounding disability. While McKinney's framework was about how professors can make their classrooms more accessible for disability and disability-identified peoples, our framework considers how universities can use ASL and Deaf Studies classrooms to increase the presence of deaf and disabled people on campus. It supports deaf people's needs as both students and faculty and enables an environment that is mindful of the varied needs and desires of deaf communities. Most importantly, our framework fosters intellectual engagement with disability. In this article, we examine how universities have profited from ASL while denying opportunities to deaf students and academics. We also explore ways that universities use ASL classes to further marginalize deaf academics. While cripping the university and having deaf leadership is fundamentally good for how universities engage with deaf scholars, if universities use the premise of cripping to force deaf scholars into limited roles within a narrow interpretation of the cripping paradigm, then cripping becomes weaponized against deaf scholars. That is, if deaf academics can only teach ASL and do nothing else, is this good for deaf and disabled people and affiliated communities?

The contradiction between ASL as a cash cow (Brueggeman 2009) and how the community that owns the language is treated is particularly sharp in higher education. ASL classes are popular, while deaf communities find their cultural spaces overrun by nondeaf students from local ASL programs. Meanwhile, deaf people continue to confront access barriers in curricular and extracurricular activities on campuses and faculty employment. For example, in March of 2017, The Daily Californian detailed Nancy

Barker's attempts to obtain suitable accommodations via signed language interpreting at University of California, Berkeley (Berkeley) (Shrivasta 2017). The Daily Californian, a local student run newspaper, described how Barker, a visiting deaf researcher, was frequently refused interpreting services by the Disabled Students' Program (DSP). DSP, which bills itself as a program that «...promotes an inclusive environment for students with disabilities,» argued that because Barker was not actually a student, only a visiting one, they were not obligated to provide her with accommodations. The obligation to provide access fell on the department that invited her. In that same month, Berkeley began the process of taking down thousands of online instructional videos and podcasts in response to a lawsuit by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which claimed their content to be inaccessible to deaf people (Larimer 2017). Berkeley, which in 2016 had an endowment fund totaling 8.8 billion USD (Serpa 2016), explained that making what they called «legacy» media accessible not only for deaf people, but for blind people as well, was prohibitively expensive.

Berkeley is not alone in its exclusion of disabled people. In recent years, more than two dozen higher education institutions, including Harvard, MIT, and Berkeley, have been sued over campus accessibility issues. If higher education institutions are preparing their students to become engaged citizens, then what are their obligations to serve and engage the communities from which their students come? While the role of higher education institutions in maintaining diverse environments of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion is clear, the inclusion of disability is less so. Higher education institutions benefit from the presence of disabled people and their contributions, including signed languages. Institutions that profit from ASL instruction must consider not only their role in the marginalization of ASL as a viable language for deaf children and marginalization of disabled people, but also whether they have an obligation to parlay some of their profits into work toward disability justice. Here we argue that disability justice is necessary for institutions that profit from the deaf and disabled communities. Higher education institutions are profiting from ASL instruction without providing a return on those profits for deaf and disabled students and faculty by removing barriers to admission, matriculation, and academic careers, while engaging in exploitative relationships with local deaf and disabled communities.

Disabled students and disability activists are familiar with the ostensible role of university disability services. These services are often perceived to exist not to provide true access and inclusion for disabled people, but to satisfy the bare minimum of legal obligations for access while remaining cost-efficient. Because of this emphasis on legal obligations and cost efficiency, disability services can become another barrier for disabled students to navigate. First, disabled individuals must recognize they have a disability and that this disability requires accommodations. The disabled person confronts challenges in identifying with a disability because they must not only come out, which in itself is fraught with danger (Samuels 2003), but also claim a status which carries its own stigma (Marshak, Ferrell, and Dugan 2005). Second, they must prove to the university that their disability is deserving of accommodation. As both Sami Schalk (2017) and Alison Kafer (2013) remind us, not all disabilities have been recognized or are identifiable by the medical authorities. Finally, the disabled person must demonstrate that

their preferred accommodation is feasible for the university, in that the accommodation is not too extravagant or expensive (Woodcock, Rohan, and Campbell 2007). One may have ASL interpretation, or a Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), but likely not both. Accommodation requests must also be made weeks in advance, with no guarantee that suitable accommodations will be provided. While able-bodied students and faculty can wait until the last minute to decide if they want to attend an academic event, the same is not true for their disabled counterparts. For example, signed language interpreters are not automatically scheduled for all academic events (Davis 2013).

The difficulties deaf and disabled college students and faculty confront in receiving appropriate accommodations are contrasted by the success and popularity of ASL classes. Studies by Russell Rosen (2008), and David Quinto-Pozos (2011), among others have demonstrated that ASL course offerings have surged in both secondary and post-secondary environments. ASL course offerings increased by 437% in a six-year span between 2003 and 2009, and ASL is now the third most-taught language in the United States (Brueggemann 2009). Those who teach ASL are familiar with the appetite for learning ASL, as they manage waiting lists and address multiple contacts from students pleading for entry into closed courses. Colleges and universities have observed the popularity of ASL and seek to profit from offering ASL courses.

Deaf people are multiply marginalized within and outside of higher education institutions while signed language education offers tremendous profit for those institutions. Higher education institutions receive millions of dollars in grants for signed language research and attract prospective students by satisfying demand for signed language curricular programming; however, signed language scholars remain largely nondeaf, and deaf students struggle to get access to classroom discourse and information. Some institutions also capitalize on offering deaf/special education programs, disability scholarship, and training in the health care professions. Yet those same institutions balk at disability inclusion efforts, directing concerns to the costs of access. The intellectual, social, and cultural benefits from having deaf and disabled people in the academy and including disability scholarship in higher education curricula outweigh those costs. Deaf and disabled people provide a unique epistemology that enrichens the discourse and offers a different lens for thinking and learning (Robinson and Henner 2017). Furthermore, accessibility for deaf and disabled people improves institutional profitability. A number of recent studies show that inclusion and access lead to increased profit, innovation, productivity, loyalty, cost efficiency, and market shares (Lindsay et al, 2018). Such exposure better prepares able-bodied students for post graduate lives and the workforce, as well as for their own likely inevitable brushes with disability (Robinson and Dechant, 1997; Leonard et al. 2002). In contrast to the influx of cash that ASL courses bring to higher education institutions, access and accommodations for deaf students and faculty are framed as a financial burden. This framing to justify denial of access and accommodation or exclude deaf people from being hired for faculty positions remain acceptable within higher education institutions. However, human, disability, and civil rights cannot be reduced to economic logic.

The benefits of having ASL instruction in colleges and universities are unquestionable and the campus presence of ASL is vital for cripping higher education (Bauman and Murray 2014). ASL in colleges and universities affords nondeaf students the opportunity to interact with disability and engage in discourse about the intersections between bodies and the society they inhabit. ASL classrooms present a forum for institutions to confront disability, systems and dynamics of power associated with ability, and linguistic inequity between spoken and signed languages. ASL reminds us that language is not limited to oral speech systems and that people can communicate complex academic ideas, craft poetry and stories, and share thoughts and feelings without speaking through the mouth. The presence of ASL lends credence to communication modes that empower disabled people, such as communication boards (Lupton and Seymour 2000). And, yet, the use of ASL is overtly political, given historical attempts to suppress and eliminate it (Baynton 1996). Thus, using ASL is defying normalcy on multiple levels as Americans grapple with prejudices toward languages other than English and insist that signed languages are not on par with spoken languages.

School systems, colleges, and universities still hire nondeaf people to teach ASL even though it is a resistance language of a marginalized community. But, ASL, when taught by culturally and linguistically competent faculty, offers us the opportunity to change the attitudes and popular beliefs that many nondeaf and able-bodied people have about signed language, deaf culture, and bilingual education. Attitudes toward signed language and respect for deaf culture play an important role in the advancement of linguistic human rights. These attitudes work in tandem with advocacy for bilingual education, the status of signed languages for access and citizenship, and the development of further research and documentation of signed languages (Murray 2015). As a party to the systematic marginalization of deaf people, offering ASL, deaf cultural studies, and Disability Studies courses offers higher education institutions an avenue to right the wrong that anti-signed language work has wreaked. And yet, simply having deaf faculty teach ASL courses alone is not enough. Higher education institutions need to critically examine how their health professions, interpreter education, and teacher preparation programs contribute to the undermining of deaf people's civil and human rights.

Through sound hiring practices, a balanced curriculum consisting of both language courses and deaf/disability studies courses, and nuanced co-curricular offerings, ASL education offers higher education institutions a valuable set of educational interventions that research shows «play a critical role in helping students increase their knowledge of other cultures, their cross-cultural sensitivity, and their capacities for intercultural communication and decrease their prejudice against others» (King, Perez, and Shim 2013). Those educational interventions are critical in achieving the aims of social justice, disability justice, and a diverse participatory democracy. Higher education institutions should capitalize on the popular appeal of ASL education to promote interest in Disability Studies and Deaf Studies. ASL classes are also a viable springboard for students to engage with the notions of ableism, audism, and disability (Bauman 2004). However, higher education institutions that purport to value diversity, equity, and inclusion should critically scrutinize their hiring practices, curriculum, co-

curricular offerings associated with their ASL programs, and the place of deaf and disabled scholars within their institutions. This is a question of social and disability justice.

As educational institutions rush to meet the growing demand for ASL classes, questions of equity, social justice, disability justice, economic justice, linguistic human rights, and cultural appropriation emerge. Fundamentally, who is qualified to teach ASL? What is the role of the deaf academic in the college and university environment? Is there a place for deaf scholars outside of the ASL classroom? What of deaf epistemologies and ontologies in the curriculum and research? Tension has emerged between deaf people and educational institutions as bloggers openly question how educational institutions determine the merits, fluency, and cultural competency of their ASL-teaching faculty (Suggs 2013; Lapiak n.d.). Some also wonder about the impact that inarticulate or culturally incompetent ASL teachers have had on an already marginalized community. Those of us who reside in deaf spaces are familiar with the boisterous nondeaf person who backs every incorrect assertion with claims that their [often nondeaf] ASL teacher taught them such. Administrators and committees in charge of hiring faculty at higher education institutions must pause and ask if their ASL teachers are teaching ASL through culturally affirming practices, or if the goal was about maximizing profit by increasing enrollment at the expense of access and inclusion (Brueggemann 2009). Along the lines of Disability Studies scholar Simi Linton's (1998) assertion, administrators, along with «...scholars of all stripes must recognize their moral and intellectual obligation to evaluate the gaps and faults in the knowledge base they disseminate to students which are a result of the missing voices of disabled people» (Linton 1998, 142). From a disability justice standpoint, administrators should ensure that those who teach ASL and deaf related classes are deaf. Authentic lived experience offers future teachers of deaf children, signed language interpreters, and others who interact with deaf people the best opportunity to develop critical linguistic and cultural competency that is essential to language acquisition and providing deaf children access to the world.

We propose schools prioritize the hiring of deaf people to teach ASL and to consider larger questions of equity, social justice, and disability justice in their ASL curricula. As Nirmala Erevelles suggests, «belonging and identity are not idle insertions into political discourse; rather they have critical implications for how the field of disability studies continue to expand and thrive (2014).» We argue that hiring deaf people falls within the praxis of cripping the college or university. It recognizes that disabled and deaf faculty members have valuable situated knowledge of lived experience with disability that enriches the learning experience. It is at this intersection where academia and activism meet in our work toward disability justice. After all, how can schools «develop disability studies courses and programming without simultaneously pushing for increased access for disabled students» [and faculty]? (Jarman and Kafer 2014)

Intersectional realities as well as historical and social differences among disability, gender, and race limit the reach of our analogies. However, research from marginalized communities suggest possible starting points of inquiry. For example, Nellie Mckay (1998) points out three central challenges to giving black faculty ownership of their community's literature production: a) the lack of a pipeline that consistently pro-

duces capable black scholars, b) an inability to dissuade white students, particularly unqualified white students, from becoming scholars in black related fields, and c) a meager pool of existing black scholars from which colleges and universities can hire. We posit that colleges and universities face similar challenges in applying disability justice principles to their ASL programs. As Michele Jarman and Alison Kafer (2014) suggested for Disability Studies, higher education institutions need «radical, innovative approaches to conceptualizing and increasing «access» in the academy» and to rethink «normative assumptions [...] and undo ableist assumptions about individual academic achievement (Jarman and Kafer 2014)» Like them, we demand that the growth of ASL and Deaf Studies be accompanied by a growth in access and opportunities for our communities. Our suggestions, in this vein, are described below.

First, there is an inadequate pipeline for producing deaf scholars who are knowledgeable in ASL and deaf-related disciplines. We propose that this is in part because of a long history of institutional violence against signed language, deaf people, and deaf culture. Signed language has been under concerted attack since the early nineteenth century by doctors, nondeaf parents of deaf children, and advocates for listening and spoken language educational paradigms. Those attacks were, and are, often steeped in eugenics, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and racism. Signed language use has been legislated against, banned, and withheld from deaf children by nondeaf people. Active campaigns against signed language remain as lively today as in 1917 (Baynton 1996, Mauldin 2016). Attitudes against signed language have also left behind a legacy of trauma imposed upon deaf communities. Deaf survivors reveal their stories of childhood neglect and physical, verbal, and psychological abuse in the documentary Audism Unveiled (Bahan, Bauman, and Montengro 2006). It was common practice among educators of deaf children to whip children on their hands with rulers or yardsticks if the children were caught signing or gesturing. One of the authors of this article observed nondeaf educators, at a listening and spoken language school for the deaf, forcing deaf children to sit on their hands, and physically preventing the children from gesturing. Deaf people live lives closely intertwined with the consequences of those attitudes toward signed language. The 21st century adult deaf community in the United States grapples with rampant print illiteracy, under- and unemployment rates ranging from 25-75% among deaf adults, and the consequences of trauma, abuse, and neglect, among a smorgasbord of still other inequities (National Deaf Center for Postsecondary Outcomes 2017). Deaf people's barriers to literacy, education, and employment are also complicated by a wide range of social factors including but not limited to socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.

Second, although nondeaf parents are discouraged from using signed language with their deaf children, teaching signed language itself remains a profitable option for nondeaf people. ASL remains a lucrative option for educational specialists who combine signs from ASL with music. Rachel Coleman (2017), a nondeaf mother of a deaf child, created Two Little Hands, a company which sells signed language educational material that stars Rachel Coleman herself, who only learned signed language after having a deaf daughter. Patty Shukla is another such example. Shukla combines what she calls «baby signs» with music to sell educational experiences to parents (Shukla n.d.). Another ex-

ample of nondeaf people's success in peddling signed language without regard to exploitation is Super Smutty Sign Language by Kristin Henson (2013). Super Smutty is branded as a signed language book and was, for a time, categorized as a Deaf Studies book. The signs in the book do not resemble actual signed language used by deaf people and is not accurate. Henson's authority on the language comes from briefly studying ASL as an undergraduate. However, people purchase this book on the premise that the signs in the book are the real deal. No material produced by deaf or hard of hearing educators has had similar success. The material popularity of ASL is keenly felt among deaf signing communities as they watch nondeaf people make enormous profits from ASL while deaf people struggle with economic marginalization; ASL has become a form of entertainment, divorced from accessibility. But who owns ASL? As Maurer (2003) points out, languages can be considered owned by a community if it is part of «a cultural inheritance». The question of language ownership has attracted legal scholars (see Hutton, 2010 for examples). Hutton (2010) describes protests against corporations appropriating Maori and Mapuche languages. Thus, the conflict about who owns ASL is not novel. The injustice is not solely that nondeaf profit from ASL; but that signed language is being withheld from deaf children while nondeaf children and their parents are encouraged to learn it.

And even while deaf children are actively denied access to the language of their community, higher education institutions profit from offering ASL classes. Brueggemann suggests that for those whose budgets depend on enrollment and semester credit hours, ASL courses have emerged as a gold mine because they fill quickly and possess long wait lists (Brueggemann 2009, 29). Nondeaf people, many deemed as dysfluent and culturally incompetent by fluent ASL speakers, fill many ASL teaching jobs, enjoying gainful employment, while deaf signers grapple with employment discrimination and institutional resistance to the provision of accommodations. Deaf signers often find themselves passed over for teaching positions in favor of less fluent nondeaf signers with dubious credentials. Due to systemic inequities, particularly in access to higher education, nondeaf signers are more likely to possess advanced terminal degrees compared to their deaf counterparts. College and universities often find it easier and more cost effective to communicate with nondeaf faculty rather than absorb the cost of accommodations, thereby making it more difficult for deaf academics to get hired. As Kathryn Woodcock, Meg Rohan, and Linda Campbell (2007) point out, colleges and universities are disincentivized to hire deaf faculty (Woodcock, Rohan, and Campbell 2007). Such higher education products contribute to the marginalization of deaf people and the degradation of ASL, while defrauding those with a sincere interest in learning ASL and about deaf people. Poorly taught signed language classes lead to unqualified, dysfluent signed language interpreters who think they are qualified, which has negative implications for deaf people. The practice of hiring nondeaf people from undergraduate academic programs in interpreting, Deaf Studies, or ASL presents a significant challenge because many of those graduates lack sufficient fluency and cultural competency to teach ASL language courses, let alone more interdisciplinary courses like Deaf and Disability Studies.

Some colleges and universities attempt to provide legitimate ASL and deaf culture experiences by hiring nondeaf signers who are children of deaf parents and therefore are considered heritage signers (see Hoffmeister 2008 for a discussion of nondeaf children of deaf parents). While heritage signers can and do provide appropriate ASL instruction, and nuanced and authentic deaf culture experiences, heritage signers must understand that they have all the privileges of being a nondeaf person in academia and unpack how they are complicit in the systemic oppression of deaf people. As Linton writes, both disabled and nondisabled people can teach or produce scholarship in Disability Studies. Nondisabled people, however, «have a responsibility to engage consciously and deliberately with these [objectification, subjectivity, and absence of voice/presence] issues in their scholarship and teaching to avoid contributing to the problem» (Linton 1998, 152).

Finally, given that academia is an institutionally violent place for many deaf scholars, it is not surprising that there is a paucity of available deaf people who can teach ASL and deaf culture classes (Stapleton 2015; Woodcock, Rohan, and Campbell 2007). Nondeaf scholar of deaf culture, Lissa Stapleton (2015), identifies that deaf academics are constantly navigating and negotiating accommodations and spaces in academic environments. For example, accommodations for faculty are often from a separate funding, if such funds exist, than those for students (see Woodcock, Rohan, and Campbell 2007 for further explanation).

Rather than being broadly handled by a single entity, such as a disability services center, institutions vary in how they fund accommodations. Some require that the department who hired the deaf or hard of hearing faculty fund accommodations, which makes hiring those faculty prohibitively expensive. Deaf academics, who are already at a disadvantage compared to those who are nondeaf, additionally must convince colleges and universities that they are worth the extra expense (Stapleton 2015). This expense is compounded if deaf academics request a dedicated ASL interpreter. Dedicated interpreters are staff who tend to work solely with one deaf person, and can greatly assist in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of deaf faculty. Nevertheless, dedicated interpreters are an additional expense for departments that hire deaf faculty, and many interpreters acknowledge that they can earn more money freelancing than working as a dedicated interpreter.

Stapleton (2015) further explains that ASL faculty tend to be the only deaf professionals at universities. Spaces are therefore abled, and nondeaf. The lack of deaf representation can lead to what Kristen Jones et al. (2017) describe as subtle discrimination. Subtle discrimination, as explained by Jones et al (Jones et al 2017) is not conscious. It is unintentionally oppressive behavior that is reinforced by systemic expectations of normalcy. Students seem to prefer building relationships with nondeaf faculty because they can converse without having to sign or use an interpreter. Other nondeaf faculty regularly go out to bars and restaurants together without inviting the deaf faculty because communication is too difficult. Deaf faculty may not always be called «doctor» even though they have a doctorate because of general expectations that any deaf faculty at a university just teach ASL. Through subtle discrimination, deaf faculty are isolated from their peers and from building viable and necessary academic relationships.

Colleges and universities who wish to offer Deaf Studies and ASL classes have an obligation to reflect upon the above-discussed social inequities that surround ASL and deaf people. As in the statement by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, we charge that «institutions should foster intellectual honesty, responsibility for society's moral health and for social justice, active participation as a citizen of a diverse democracy, discernment of the ethical consequences of decisions and action, and a deep understanding of one's self and respect for the complex identities of others, their histories and their cultures» (Mayhew and Fernández 2007, 55).

How to Make This Right: Practicing Inclusion

The first step for institutions to ameliorate years of profiting from the deaf community while at the same time creating barriers for deaf students and faculty, is to recognize the marginalization of ASL and deaf people. The next is to accord ASL the same respect given other languages and cultures. The teaching of ASL should satisfy the object of teaching foreign languages in liberal arts institutions and meet general education requirements in core areas, such as social studies, or global languages, which Daniel Yankelovich (2005) suggests is the promotion of translingual and transcultural competency. However, ASL holds possibilities beyond Yankelovich's translingual and transcultural competency. Finally, we must crip the ASL classroom and heed Linton's suggestions for developing Disability Studies. Cripped ASL classrooms foster student engagement with disability as not a problem but as «an issue, an idea, a metaphor, a phenomenon, a culture, and a construction «(Linton 1998, 134). To this end, how do we align the teaching of ASL with the Modern Language Association's (MLA 2007) assertion that there should be a «broad, intellectually driven approach to teaching language and culture in higher education?» (MLA 2007). The answer lies in extending authors Jan Kanda and Larry Fleischer's 1988 discussion of the question «Who is Qualified to Teach American Sign Language?,» to consider how institutions can approach staffing, curricular design, and co-curricular activities in ASL programs with integrity. The discussion below intends to orient the readers to solutions available in current scholarship.

The object here is not specifically to argue what qualifies one to teach ASL but instead to advocate for authentic voices in ASL teaching. This is perhaps the most contentious arena for cripping the ASL classroom. Dirk Hillard (2017), the president of the Quad-Cities deaf club in Iowa, critiqued a college in the local press for offering ASL classes but not hiring deaf instructors to teach those classes (Hillard 2017). Hillard's suggestion that ASL programs should hire deaf, not nondeaf, instructors drew ire. Hillard is far from alone in his opinion. Many deaf people believe the practice of hiring nondeaf people to teach ASL classes to be an act of cultural and economic appropriation (Lapiak n.d.). Deaf people frame this argument, grounded in disability justice, as «nothing about us without us,» even as colleges scramble to satisfy demand for ASL classes. Nondeaf people substantially oppose this argument (Timpf 2017).

Placing deaf people in the classroom as the language teacher, model, and cultural authority offers students firsthand experience with transcending the boundaries between deaf and nondeaf, ability and disability. Deaf people's direct experience with a lifetime of navigating the world as non-hearing people adds a critical sensibility to teaching ASL and about the deaf experience.

This firsthand experience facilitated by authentic voices in the classroom brings students closer to an authentic encounter with deaf culture and organic use of signed language. In addition to Kanda and Fleischer's suggestion that the ideal ASL teacher has, «identifiable education and knowledge, along with certain skills and attitudes,» we suggest that the ASL teacher is an individual with cultural competence and experience within deaf culture (Kanda and Fleischer 1988, 183). The teacher must be able to teach ASL in close relation to deaf cultures and in the context of the marginalization of signed language in American popular culture. While heritage signers (that is, nondeaf children of signing deaf parents) can meet all the requirements, we still emphasize that college and universities aiming to live by their missions of social justice should employ preferential hiring of deaf people. Deaf people in the classrooms serve as genuine conduits to local deaf communities, which can partner with the teaching classroom to provide opportunities for exposure to a wide range of language use, registers, and lived experiences. We furthermore argue that preferential hiring of deaf people does not constitute discrimination against nondeaf people, or «reverse audism» (see Eckert and Rowley 2013 for a discussion of audism). Rather, preferential hiring is a matter of corrective action in addressing economically marginalized deaf people. Beyond corrective action, colleges and universities should examine their inclusion practices to most effectively include deaf faculty within the institution, address implicit and explicit biases in hiring practices, and dismantle educational barriers that prevent deaf people from ascending higher education.

Offering ASL classes without considering those complexities and politics surrounding ASL and deaf communities contributes to the exploitation and marginalization of deaf people. Kanda and Fleischer, in their prescient 1988 piece, suggested that institutions «have an obligation to preserve the language and safeguard it from poor instruction and from those who do not respect its value as a language and the people who use it (Kanda and Fleischer 1988, 185-186).» This question persists three decades after the publication of their essay.

Authentic voices entreat us to consider authentic encounters with those different from us and shifts one's own paradigm. How might we use ASL as a vehicle for teaching about the intersections of disability, difference, power, and social justice? Authentic encounters through the professor and through the texts, the curriculum, and co-curricular activities promote dialogue about disability justice, and reinforce the «nothing about us without us» sensibility. Deaf Studies scholar Dirksen Bauman (2004) once suggested that the popularity of ASL classes would be a good opportunity to expose students to the concept of audism. By becoming aware of audism, students could then become more aware of their own microaggressions, of how they reproduce audist and ableist systems, and how they might become agents for a more just society. Learning about disability justice offers our students the opportunity to engage in conversations about other movements for social justice; and vice versa (Jarman and Kafer 2014).

Kanda and Fleischer suggest that good language teachers should have abilities to teach language while focusing on culture. Cultural awareness facilitates effective second language instruction (Kanda and Fleischer 1988, 186). Beyond tapping people on the shoulder and congregating in kitchens, what is deaf culture and what does it mean

to teach ASL with a focus on culture? We argue that the ASL curriculum should situate language study in «cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of humanistic learning» (MLA 2007).

The inclusion of a critical disability lens in the ASL program, through the incorporation of deaf and disability studies, extends the authentic encounter through critical engagement. To achieve this, deaf and disabled voices should be situated front and center. Deaf-centric materials are authored and produced by deaf people and focused on deaf cultural content: history, literature, rhetoric, and art. Deaf-centric material must be accompanied by mandated but carefully curated interactions with the community, and the use of deaf language models, or people who are fluent in the language but are not currently teaching it in the classroom. Scholarship by disabled people and from Disability Studies also contribute meaningfully to critical explorations of the place of deaf and disabled people in society. Well-designed collaboration with the local deaf and disabled communities for co-curricular learning can also be empowering for both the local communities and for students (See Fisher 2014 for further discussion of well-designed signed language based co-curricular programming). Collaborative co-curricular learning with local deaf and disabled communities with emancipatory attitudes produces critical encounters with disability and inequity for students to explore through discussion, collaboration, reflection, and interaction (Mayhew and Fernández 2007).

Students who take Disability Studies classes recognize that disability is a key aspect of human experience, and that disability has important political, social, and economic implications for society as a whole, including both disabled and non- disabled people. Most importantly, it allows able-bodied students to understand how they are complicit in a system which punishes deviations from normalcy and socially ideal bodies and minds (Schalk 2017). This framework of disability justice is necessary if institutions that offer ASL courses believe in their higher education missions and in the mission of language education, which is to foster cultural competence and globally engaged citizens. Perhaps of value is recognizing that disabled people compose a significant portion of our communities. Recent statistics suggest nearly one in five Americans have a disability (U.S. Census 2017). A critical approach to teaching ASL and Deaf Studies, considering its popularity, offers institutions an extraordinary opportunity to create a space for students to explore social justice and engage in sustained structural analysis of power dynamics. Encounters with disability and disabled people in higher education prepares students to be engaged global citizens. Expanding spaces for authentic encounters outside the classroom through collaborative learning efforts with local deaf communities offer students the opportunity to gain translingual and transcultural knowledge (Fisher 2014). For example, community-based learning can include volunteering as coaches for a community-based children's sports teams with deaf participants, working with local deaf political advocacy organizations, or assisting with local deaf abuse survivors' agencies.

Collaborative learning becomes increasingly important as deaf cultural spaces dwindle out of existence due to social changes. Skyrocketing enrollment numbers for ASL classes far outpace the numbers of culturally identified deaf people and native users of ASL. With deaf spaces dwindling and the crunch of nondeaf «visitors» to limited

deaf spaces, deaf activists are now actively resisting the customary practice of ASL teachers of sending students to deaf events for language immersion. They argue that nondeaf «visits» turn deaf events into spectacles of disability. Professors who require nondeaf «visits» for credit frequently resort to invasive methodologies to ensure that their nondeaf and able-bodied students actually are visiting deaf spaces, such as selfies with deaf citizens and presenters. Popular slogans among resistors and activists include «we are not your deaf field trip» and «we are not animals in a zoo.» Community visits by nondeaf students for course credit is a sore point for deaf people, whose clubs and schools are closing or dwindling. Many deaf people increasingly rely upon temporary spaces such as deaf happy hour or deaf religious meetings for social opportunities, to converse fluently in their own language (thus giving ASL organic spaces to flourish), and to vent about living in a world that is made for nondeaf people. To continue sending students to deaf events for language immersion without collaboration with the local deaf communities can be considered an invasive act; that is, it shifts the purpose of deaf spaces to accommodate nondeaf needs. Alternatively, places trying to provide access to deaf people are often overrun when they hold ASL-accessible events. Nondeaf students of ASL dominate the spaces. For example, it is common for museum tour guides to be asked to sign more slowly during ASL tours for ASL students, depriving deaf patrons of full access and enjoyment of the tour.

Making this sort of behavior especially egregious is the fact that ASL accessibility is an ongoing struggle, as evidenced by Berkeley's refusal to provide interpreters for Barker. As well-known ASL educator, author, and poet Ella Mae Lentz (2011) said in her YouTube video, we owe the existence and beauty of ASL to the generations of deaf people who originated and grew the language (Lentz 2011). Therefore, it's important that educators consider carefully how they send nondeaf students into deaf spaces. To minimize negative repercussions for local deaf communities by nondeaf seeking authentic experiences, teachers of ASL and deaf culture who wish for their students to have language immersion experiences should work in collaboration with the local deaf communities to create emancipatory spaces for learning encounters to take place. Well-mediated encounters create spaces and moments where ASL and deaf culture students develop intuitive use of language and reflect on their applications of classroom learning. Solutions should come from local deaf communities themselves and signed language faculty are obligated to perform community outreach.

As Mckay (1998) reminds us, finding suitable minority teachers to teach classes about their language, culture, and heritage can be difficult because systemic barriers and oppression makes attaining higher education challenging. Deaf education researchers Carrie Lou Garberoglio, Stephanie Cawthon, and Adam Sales (2017) report that deaf people typically have lower educational outcomes than comparable able-bodied people (Garberoglio et al. 2017). Only seven percent of the deaf population earn advanced degrees. These numbers further decrease if deafness is one of multiple disabilities (e.g. deafblind, deafdisabled) and for deaf people of color. The funding structure of colleges and universities sometimes do not allow for hiring faculty who do not have terminal degrees. This can inadvertently create situations where college and universities hire nondeaf people because of bureaucratic inertia. More social justice minded colleges and

universities that prefer deaf professors often find that not every deaf graduate student or faculty member is interested in teaching ASL or deaf related content. However, because social justice minded colleges and universities are incentivized to have deaf professors, since doing so allows them to ethically profit from ASL and deaf culture classes, many deaf faculty and graduate students feel pressure to teach ASL and deaf related content. Both authors of this paper, a historian, and an applied linguist, report that they have at times been required to teach ASL, or felt pressure from administrators and peers to teach ASL and deaf related courses «because a deaf person should teach those classes, right?» Furthermore, fluency in signed language alone does not ensure pedagogical ability to teach a language well. The expectation that any deaf faculty or graduate students will teach ASL or deaf related content creates environments where the rarity of deaf scholars leads nondeaf staff and faculty to automatically assume that any deaf scholar is an ASL teacher. Such expectations and assumptions can be considered a form of microaggression.

Deaf scholars struggle to find employment in higher education outside ASL and Deaf Studies programs. In the rare cases where deaf faculty who do not teach ASL or deaf related content, but work alongside nondeaf faculty who do, those deaf faculty are often called upon to reassure their nondeaf colleagues that it is okay for them to teach ASL and Deaf Studies. Managing nondeaf or able-bodied fragilitycan be considered a form of emotional labor performed by deaf faculty for nondeaf colleagues. The concept of nondeaf or able-bodied fragility is inspired by Robin DiAngelo's (2011) white fragility and the notion of fragile masculinity from gender studies. DiAngelo defines white fragility as «a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves,» (DiAngelo 2011, 57). She further explains that white people tend to be racially comfortable, which means that they often do not have to face racial conflict (DiAngelo 2011). White people find affirmative action and so-called political correctness threatening because they feel that they're being individually targeted.

The concept of fragility also extends to other types of intersectional scholarship. Fragility has been used by feminist scholars to examine the effects of patriarchy and toxic masculinity on cisnormative, heterosexual, male behavior, while recognizing the intersections of gender and race in shaping responses to challenges to one's privileges. Men, because of the privileges and expectations of their gender, also engage in defensiveness when confronted about patriarchy, sexism, and gendered equity. The frequency of this occurrence on social media has led to a popular hashtag, #masculinitysofragile. Similarly, nondeaf or able-bodied people rarely find themselves fighting for accommodations or disability justice unless they themselves are temporarily or permanently disabled. When the deaf community points out that deaf people who want to teach ASL and Deaf Studies should have primacy over nondeaf people, nondeaf teachers of ASL and Deaf Studies feel threatened. As mentioned earlier, nondeaf teachers rely on deaf faculty for reassurance that their jobs are not at risk. «I'm a good teacher of ASL, aren't I,» they ask the deaf faculty, «Should I quit my job? Do you want my job?». As Ayana Weekley (2012) explains, efforts by oppressor groups to align

themselves with their oppressed counterparts reflect a desire to minimize intersectional conflict while benefiting themselves (Weekley 2012).

McKee and Woodward (2014) suggest that the best way to both foster social justice minded signed language and deaf culture education, and promote jobs and education in the deaf community, while minimizing the hiring of nondeaf faculty, is to train members of local deaf communities how to become signed language instructors. Colleges and universities can fund this training, both as an investment in individual deaf persons, and to ensure that their ASL and deaf culture classes are taught by competent deaf people. Because ASL classes are so profitable, supporting the education of future ASL teachers serves the interest of colleges and universities. However, this option does not confront inherent challenges in making lines of funding available for faculty with non-terminal degrees. It also requires that colleges and universities examine promotion tracks for that faculty who are hired only as instructors, adjuncts, or lecturers.

Profiting off ASL while not actively seeking to employ deaf people or include them in the power structures of the university is unethical. We agree with the MLA that there needs to be a transformation of how languages are taught—not as a two-tiered structure but as a more coherent and cohesive curriculum. This applies to ASL: instead of seeing it as some language study followed by professional training in interpreting or deaf education, we should approach ASL as a more «continuous whole» with interdisciplinary appeal. This interdisciplinary appeal emphasizes ASL's place in the humanities and within the larger scope of a liberal arts education.

Conclusion

In the vein of scholar William Platter (2011), who wonders about the decisions that shape higher education's engagement with communities, we ask how those institutions engage with deaf and disabled communities when they offer signed language classes. We argue that any institution that has ASL and deaf culture classes must engage with deaf communities. Higher education institutions with a commitment to liberal education understand that their institutional mission depends on «the integrity of the curriculum...[which] requires integrity of the institution (Gaff and Meacham 2006). To this end, we argue that those institutions with an interest in offering ASL classes should be invested in authentic voices, authentic faculty, and authentic encounters within and outside the ASL classroom. The absence of bona-fide deaf people from ASL programs—as teachers or as community partners—contributes to the «othering» of deaf people. That is, nondeaf students are not exposed to deaf people. However, this type of exposure is critical in recognizing the humanity of those who are not like us. To teach ASL without deaf linguistic models is to miss the opportunity to promote interaction across difference and serves as a form of erasure. The value of ethical decision making in implementing, administering, teaching ASL in higher education is to understand the impact of institutional actions on local communities, and on the lived experiences of deaf people who struggle because of cultural appropriation, economic discrimination, and linguistic marginalization. For example, ASL students may graduate from a signed language interpreter education program but remain dysfluent and absent the cultural competence to work as an effective interpreter. As Kanda and Fleischer (1988) suggest,

teachers should respect the language [ASL] and its history. We argue institutions should too, through deliberative hiring and curricular decision-making.

As Mayhew and Fernandez (2007) point out, «embedded in the mission of U.S. Higher education is the ideal that colleges and universities are responsible for graduating students with the capacities and skills needed to be tolerant and responsible citizens in a diverse democracy» (Mayhew and Fernandez 2007, 76). Our challenge to administrators is that institutions work to remedy the wrongs visited upon deaf people to compensate for how they've profited from ASL coursework. Hire ASL teachers capable of engaging nondeaf students in the local deaf communities in socially responsible ways. Introduce students to Deaf Studies and Disability Studies scholarship. Encourage nondeaf students to encounter authentic deaf people and native users of ASL. Deliver a high-quality learning experience in ASL where students achieve true linguistic and cultural fluency and competency. Furthermore, we remind administrators that offering ASL and Deaf Studies courses to nondeaf people while actively denying deaf people full access to university courses and events, and not hiring deaf scholars to fill positions outside the deaf niche is the very essence of audism. Berkeley, which was used as an example of a university that refuses basic accommodations for its deaf students, has several levels of ASL courses, and deaf culture classes as well.

We do not intend to make the argument that ASL courses or Deaf Studies are the best way to expose nondeaf people to deaf experiences, nor that ASL or Deaf Studies courses are the best way to recruit deaf and disabled faculty. Rather, the popularity of ASL courses serves as an splendid vehicle for improving access, equity, and quality of life for deaf people (Bauman 2004) and by extension, encourage students to intellectually engage with disability. The absence of strong cultural content in an ASL course, and especially with a teacher not versed in authentic representations of deaf culture, contributes to the erasure of deaf culture and deaf experience in shaping the language and its existence in the 21st century. A well-designed ASL or Deaf Studies course presents the opportunity for students to learn about attitudes about languages, linguicism, linguistic inequities, nationalism, hegemony of English, ableism and the place of disability in American society, and the richness of deaf culture and deaf gain (Bauman and Murray 2014). The social justice benefits of offering ASL and Deaf Studies encourage us to think about language as a human right, disability rights, access, and inclusion. The barriers surrounding ASL afford us the opportunities to discuss language attitudes in the United States, often centered on race and ethnicity, anti-bilingualism, and xenophobia. Those discussions allow students to develop and apply analytical tools to critique how disability is framed in the media. Applying the disability lens encourages students to think about how divergent bodies are othered and observe how society is structured to perpetuate cycles of structural inequity. ASL represents an opportunity to serve as a springboard for teaching social justice, disability justice, and as a bridge to Deaf and Disability Studies (Erevelles, 2000). But colleges and universities must first model what they want their students to learn by engaging with and exemplifying the principles of civic engagement and equity.

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